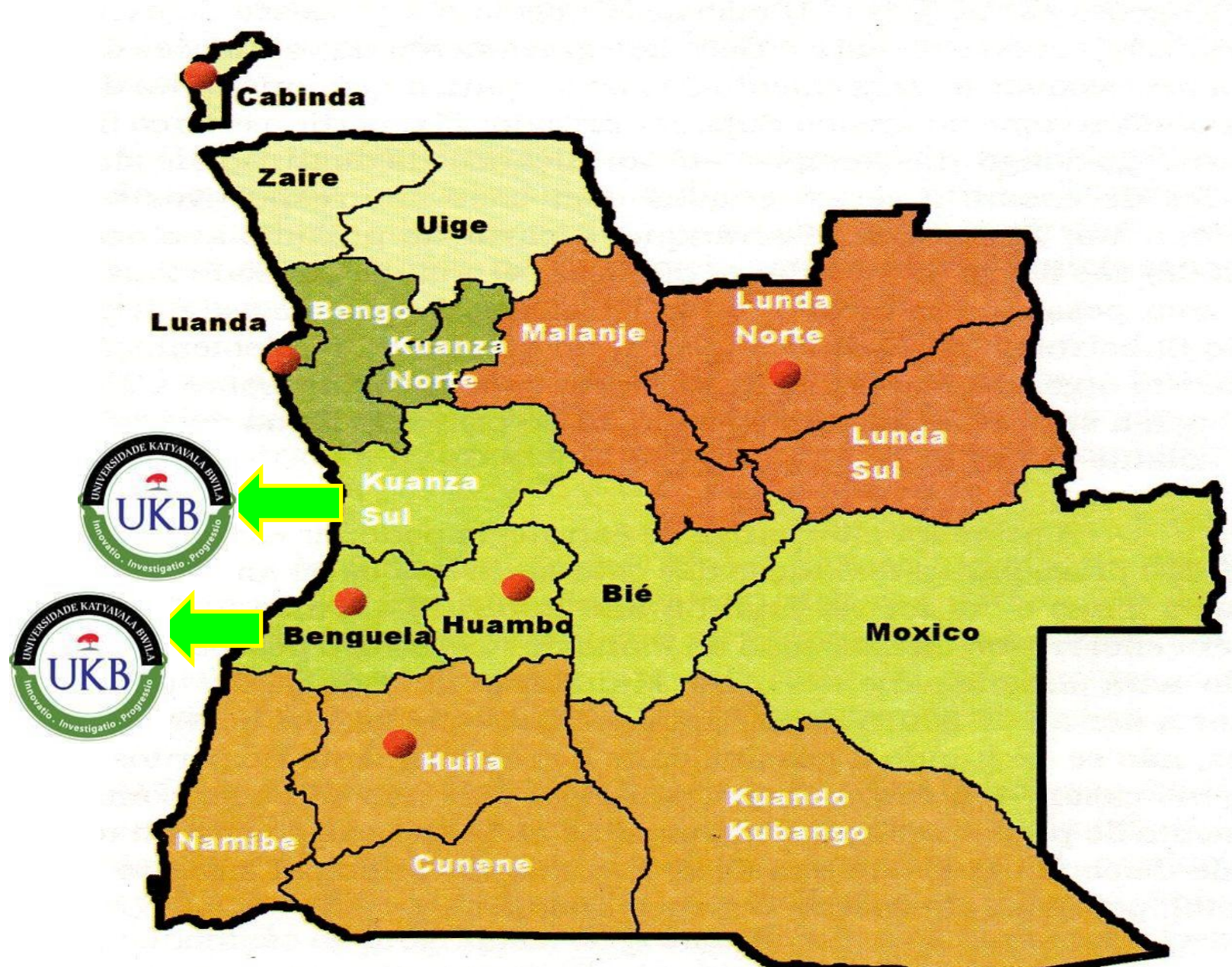




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# INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN ANGOLA: The voice of student teachers

This paper reports on findings from a broader piece of research on Initial Teacher Education in Angola within the context of a PhD thesis. The goals of the research project are: i) to characterise Initial Teacher Training at the (Higher Education Institutes for Sciences of Education); ii) to analyse the curriculum of the Initial Training at the (Higher Education Institutes for Sciences of Education); iii) to analyse the perspectives and experiences of the different stakeholders in regard to the model of Initial Teacher Education in Angola, with a particular focus on curriculum and practicum; iv) to reflect upon different models of organising the curriculum of teacher education; v) to discuss the effectiveness of the training programmes from the point of view of policy makers, preservice teachers and staff. The Higher Education Institutes for Sciences of Education in Angola which are currently responsible for the training of teachers are facing a process of restructuring (as other areas of Education in Angola) in order for student teachers to be more competent, reflective and critical thinkers. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. In total, all student teachers in Year 4 of the Pedagogy course at two Higher Education Institutes for Sciences of Education in Angola (n=275) and 47 staff participated in the study. The Vice-Minister for Higher Education in Angola, the National Director for Initial Teacher Education at the Ministry of Education, the Regional Director for Education of Benguela Province and a member of the National Institute for Educational Research which is responsible for Initial Teacher Education were also interviewed. This paper focuses upon the perspective of student teachers. In general, preliminary findings suggest the lack of articulation between theory and practice in teacher education programmes, an academic perspective of teacher training, with a stronger emphasis on the scientific dimension, making the process of becoming a teacher a more traditional one, with a limited and more theoretical pedagogical training.

## Initial Teacher Training in Angola

Initial training of teachers is a major challenge to improving the quality of teaching and education in Angola. The education reform initiated in 2004, the transformations of the knowledge society, the characteristics of the digital age, the diversified needs of the students brought new demands for teachers as key players in the curriculum. Given these requirements, it is necessary that the Institutes of Education work to ensure that the required training and development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are taken into account within the economic environment, the policy context. Teacher Education in Angola has been one of the concerns of the Angolan authorities, as well as the development in all areas of life after the peace achieved in 2002 and within an era of globalization.

The age of participants range from 20 to 56 years old and the average is 33,2.

## FINDINGS

By and large, 63% of the participants stated that their training is adequate and 10% consider it to be inadequate.

In regard to the teaching practice, they state that it is not adequate at all. They claim that its duration is too short.

As for the *modus operandi* of teaching practice, 45.8% (n=121), are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, while 29.5% (n = 78) said they are dissatisfied, 2.3% (n = 6) are totally dissatisfied and 2.3% (n = 6) are completely satisfied.

As for the methods of assessment within teaching practice, 41.4% (n = 111) are indifferent, 31.0% (n = 83) state that they are unhappy about this question, 22.4 % (n = 60) are satisfied and 3.4% (n = 9) are totally satisfied, and 1.9% are completely satisfied.

For 88, 7% the training course corresponded to their expectations. Yet, when asked about their level of satisfaction in regard to a number of issues, their perceptions are negative, namely in regard to the development of teaching competencies and the duration of the teaching practice.

The degree of satisfaction and / or dissatisfaction with the year in which the pedagogical practice occurs in the curriculum, 41.9% (n=111) state they were dissatisfied, 35.5% (n = 94) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied , 17.7% (n = 47) claim that they are satisfied and 3.8% (n = 10) are totally satisfied.

In regard to the support and guidance received during the teaching practice, 33.6% (n = 91) state they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 31.0% (n = 84) claim that they are dissatisfied, 26.2% (n = 71 ) say that they are satisfied and 4.1% completely satisfied.

## Discussion

- A number of issues may be identified within the context of initial teacher education (ITE) in Angola, which need further analysis:
- ❖ Limited development of the scientific knowledge in order to do the job (and this has implications for the ITE curricula). The mastery of the content knowledge is of crucial importance for preservice teachers.
  - ❖ Lack of research within ITE. The need of empirical work within and on ITE is of key for the development of a more adequate and consistent training model in Angola.
  - ❖ Lack of ICT component within ITE curriculum.
  - ❖ Lack of time for the pedagogical component, particularly in regard to the teaching practice.
  - ❖ The existence of the practical component at the end of the course which leads to a separation between theory and practice hindering reflection about the teaching practice and the process of becoming a teacher, with implications for teacher identity.
  - ❖ Lack of coherence between the training model (and its curriculum) and the kind of practice expected from the preservice teachers.